

# Arkansas

# Spinal Courier

A Publication of the Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission

June, 1990

## First Annual Conference a Huge Success!

The First Annual Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission Conference entitled "Living with Spinal Cord Injuries in the 90's" was held on June 8, 1990 at Holiday Inn West in Little Rock.

What a great day! What a festive atmosphere! Everyone seemed to have a good time especially the clients and their families. Registrations numbered 145.

Some clients got up at 4:00 a.m. to arrive by 8:00 a.m. from places

See Conference on page 2.



Conference attendees pack main meeting room.

## Fishing Derby Wheels and Reels Them In

The first annual "wheels and reels" fishing derby for North Central Arkansas ASSCC clients and their families was held on Crown Lake at Fisherman Park in Horseshoe Bend, Saturday, May 26th.

The derby was jointly sponsored by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission. The Game and Fish Commission stocked Crown Lake with 500 pounds of channel catfish for the derby. About one hundred people were scheduled to attend, however, the rain and stormy weather reduced the expected crowd to about 35. However, everyone seemed to have a good time despite the stormy weather.



Charles Crowson, ASSCC Case Manager, presents prizes to Aaron and Susie Comb.

Contestants competed for prizes in the following categories: first fish caught, largest fish caught, and largest fish caught by a lady. Prizes were furnished by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and consisted of two rods-and-reels and a tackle box. The winners were James Garrett for the first fish caught, Aaron Comb for largest fish caught, and Susie Comb for the largest fish caught in the lady's division.

The noon meal consisted of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, French fries, and all the trimmings. The evening meal was to be catfish; however, not enough fish were caught, so, hamburgers were the menu of the day!

This was our first fishing derby, but certainly not our last!

## Arkansas *Spinal Courier*

Published bi-monthly by  
Arkansas State  
Spinal Cord Commission

Cheryl L. Vines  
Executive Director

Thomas L. Farley  
Editor

Published in cooperation with the Ar-  
kansas Department of Human Services,  
Division of Children and Family Ser-  
vices, Child Protective Service Unit.

## BUCKLE UP!

### Brochure Lists Resources for Children with Disabilities

A new brochure will soon be available to help Arkansans find appropriate services for children with disabilities. Produced by the Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission, the brochure lists nine Arkansas resources frequently used by children with disabilities. Federal Public Laws and Supreme Court Decisions which guarantee the rights and needs of children with disabilities are also summarized.

If you would like to receive a copy, contact your Case Manager or ASSCC Central Office at 371-3011.



Henry Heffington gets a tune-up from Case Manager Dan Stell.

### Conference from page 1.

like Fayetteville, Mountain Home, El Dorado and Twist. Everyone seemed as eager for the social contact as for the information the speakers and vendors presented. If you didn't make it to this year's conference, plan on attending next year for sure.



Keynote speaker Kent Wal-drep with ceremonial hog hat.

Below are some of the highlights of the conference.



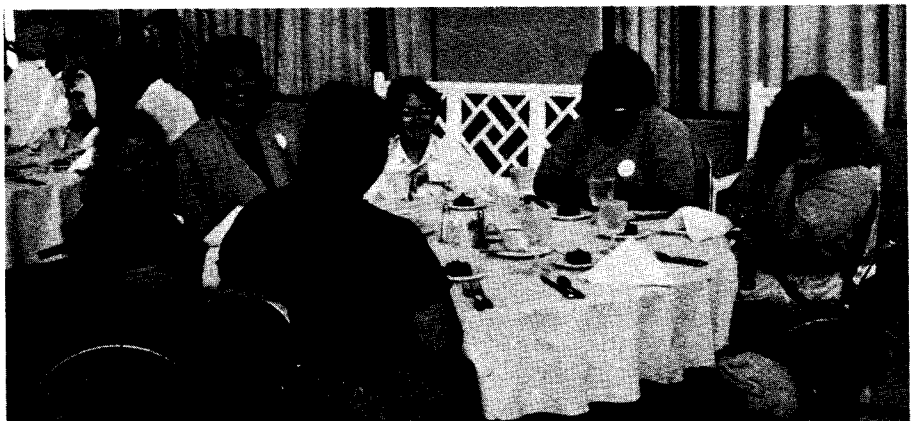
Patti Rogers of the ASSCC staff introduces the panelists for the successful living discussion: David Terry (next to Patti), Robert Neasley, Rozene Whitby, Lamont Harris and Dr. Terry Winkler.



Vendors display the latest in equipment and supplies.



Dr. McCluer consults with Robert Owens on-the-spot.



Attendees enjoy a tasty luncheon in the spacious dining area.

# Access to the Skies

Public Law 99-435, the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986, prohibits discrimination by the airlines against people with disabilities. Most airlines have adopted specific policies and procedures to accommodate passengers who use wheelchairs, though some are more accommodating than others! Whether you travel for business or pleasure, are a frequent flyer or a once in a lifetime passenger, the following tips may be useful to you.

**PLAN AHEAD** Advance notice will make your trip much easier. Be sure to inform the travel agent or airline reservationist that you use a wheelchair. Also tell them whether or not you can walk at all (they transport many elderly people who use wheelchairs but CAN walk short distances). **DO NOT ASSUME** that the travel agent will inform the airline - **ASK AND REMIND** them to do so. Also, when requesting seat assignments, ask for **BULKHEAD** seats. They are closest to the front of the plane and allow extra leg room to maneuver into the seat. If your wheelchair is electric, inform them now.

**ARRIVE EARLY** Airlines request that you arrive at least one hour before your flight and it is important to do so. Remind the staff when you arrive that you will require early boarding. Typically, those who require extra time to board are boarded first - often 30 to 45 minutes before take-off time. The more time you have, the easier the process goes.

**DO NOT CHECK YOUR WHEELCHAIR** Though the attendant may suggest that you check your wheelchair and use an airport chair, **INSIST** that you stay in your wheelchair until you board. At the gate they will provide you with a "gate tag" for your wheelchair. Be sure to attach it to a nonremovable part (the frame).

If you have a stop or a layover ask that your wheelchair be checked only to the first stop and brought up to you at the stop. Otherwise you may end up in an airport chair, that you may not be able to maneuver. However, if the layover is short or you use an electric wheelchair, it may be quicker to let the escort assist you in an airport wheelchair.

**BOARDING** Depending upon the size of the plane and your wheelchair, you may be able to roll onto the plane and transfer to your seat. If you can do so, roll backwards down the aisle so that you will be facing the same direction as your seat to make transfer easier. Many newer planes have removable aisle armrests. If not, the flight staff or someone accompanying you may need to assist. If your wheelchair won't fit down the aisle, you will be asked to transfer on to an "aisle chair" at the entrance to the plane. The aisle chair is narrow and you are seat belted to it for stability. An attendant then moves you down the aisle to your seat. Flight attendants will assist you with transfers if needed. It is important to be assertive and tell them specifically how they can be of help!

**ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIRS** In order to transport electric wheelchairs, you must disconnect the batteries. Dry cell batteries may be left in place but most electric wheelchairs have wet cell batteries which must be removed and placed in a special container to prevent leakage. Be sure to request a container when you check in. This may require extra time.

**INFLIGHT** The flight attendants will assist you with basic needs, however they are not usually equipped with adaptive equipment, so bring your own straws, cuffs, or other eating utensils on board. The restrooms are typical-

ly NOT accessible and there is no way to get to them (no aisle chairs on board) so plan accordingly. You may need to limit fluid intake before and during the flight. Also, though they look soft, often airline seats have hard cushions so bring your own cushion aboard and sit on it!

**DEBOARDING** First-on, last-off is the story, so be patient when the plane arrives. It is often a good idea to remind the flight attendant about 30 minutes before arrival to radio ahead so your chair can be brought up and/or an aisle chair is waiting.

**GOOD NEWS** Airlines are becoming more aware, more accommodating and more accessible to travelers with disabilities. Restrooms on new planes are wider and aisle chairs are being developed for inflight mobility. In the meantime, you are a paying passenger like everyone else, and your rights to travel by air and access cannot be denied! Discrimination is against the law. If you feel you have been discriminated against on an airline, report the incident to: Director, Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Transportation, 400 7th St., SW, WA DC 20590.

For a free booklet "Ten Questions and Answers About Air Travel For Wheelchair Users", published by the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans of America, call their hotline at 1-800-444-0120.

Happy flying!

---

## David Barrett Gets All A's

David Barrett who was featured in the March, 1990 issue of the Spinal Courier has maintained a 4.00 grade point average in computer science at Phillips County Community College. David is currently working at home part time for a Conway firm. He hopes to continue with his education in the Fall.

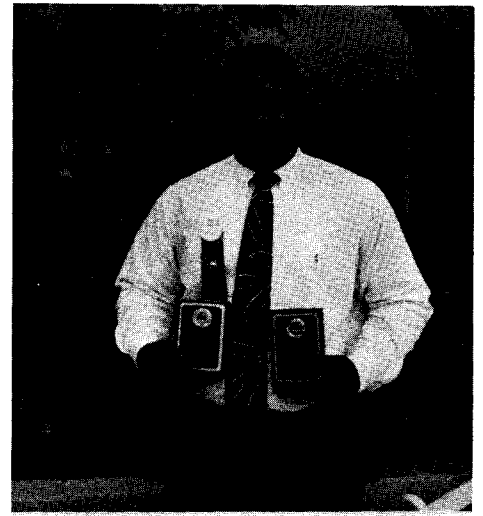
## Bobby Johnson Receives Award

Bobby Johnson, ASSCC Case Manager, was selected the "Outstanding Employee of the Year" and "The Most Positive Employee of the Year" by the Jefferson County Department of Human Services Office. Awards were presented at the DHS Employee Awards Recognition Banquet June 2, 1990 at the Wilson World Hotel and Convention Center in Pine Bluff. Pat Liles, Executive Director of The Governor's Commission on Arkansas' Future was the banquet keynote speaker.

According to J. Y. Williams, County Administrator, awards

were given in four categories: most dependable and cooperative, most positive, most cheerful, and outstanding employee. DHS area staff cast secret ballots and the recipients are not announced until the awards ceremony. "Bobby exhibits a very wholesome and positive attitude regarding his work as a case manager with the ASSCC. He also works on county office projects and is more than willing to volunteer his time wherever he's needed."

The Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission extended their congratulations to Mr. Johnson during



its Annual Case Managers Meeting, June 6-7, 1990 and commended him for his efforts.

## BARRIER AWARENESS DAY A SUCCESS IN SPITE OF RAIN

On May 11, about one hundred people gathered in the Wal-Mart parking lot in Benton to take part in Barrier Awareness Day. An obstacle course was set up to challenge non-disabled persons to go up ramps, into elevators and through difficult entrances in wheelchairs. Non-disabled persons were amazed at how easily disabled persons were able to accomplish these tasks. They also learned of the many areas of the community that are not accessible to wheelchairs.

After going through the obstacle course herself, Deputy Sandy Ro-



meo, Benton Sheriff's Department, assisted students in a school group as they took the challenge. The highlight of the event was a demonstration by the Rollin' Razorbacks, the 2nd ranked wheelchair basketball team in the nation.

Representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran's Administration, United Medical, Inc., National Medical Rentals and Van Conversions were available to discuss needs and demonstrate the latest technological advances. A few sprinkles of rain late in the morning sent vendors scurrying to get equipment under cover. In spite of the showers, spectators stayed to see the Rollin' Razorbacks. The Spinal Cord Commission is grateful to the committee that planned this event and to Don Henry, Benton Wal-Mart manager, for providing the portable basketball goal.

### *Arkansas Spinal Courier*

Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission  
Medical Arts Bldg., Suite 207  
1120 Marshall Street  
Little Rock, AR 72202

BULK RATE  
US POSTAGE  
PAID

Little Rock, AR  
Permit # 3168